REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed June 25, 2003 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 1-17 are pending in this application, with claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 16, and 17 being the only independent claims. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action mailed June 25, 2003, each of the independent claims stands rejected using U.S. Patent No. 5,507,228 (Schulz) as a primary reference. As stated in the Office Action, Schulz has a U.S. filing date that is 12 days after the applicants German priority date.

In accordance with the Examiner's request, a certified translation of the priority document is submitted concurrently herewith in the attached Letter Submitting Certified Translation of Priority Document as required under rule 1.55(a). The certified copy of the priority document was previously filed on July 28, 1997, as evidenced by the attached copies of the Letter Transmitting Priority Document and stamped postcard indicating receipt of the certified priority document at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Since the claim to priority is now perfected, the primary reference Schulz should now be withdrawn as being filed after the priority date of the present application. Since Schulz is the primary reference for each of the rejections of the independent claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 16, and 17, it is respectfully requested that the rejections of claims 1-17 should now be withdrawn.
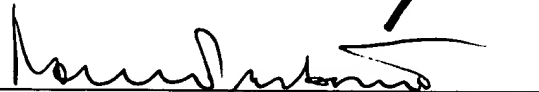
The application is now deemed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is solicited.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application; however, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,

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